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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [EAGR](#) [KCOR](#) [EC](#)
SUBJECT: ECUADOR GOVERNMENT MINISTER LARREA ON CONSTITUENT
ASSEMBLY, ADMINISTRATION OBJECTIVES

REF: A. QUITO 2234

[1](#)B. QUITO 2233

Classified By: Ambassador Linda Jewell for reason 1.4 (D)

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Speaking October 10 at a luncheon meeting with eight Ambassadors (including Ambassador Jewell), Government Minister Gustavo Larrea described the Correa administration's philosophy, how it translated into success in the Constituent Assembly elections, and provisions the administration sought in the new Constitution. He twice thanked the USG for its support of Ecuador's counter-narcotics programs. (End Summary)

[1](#)2. (SBU) The luncheon, hosted by the Swiss ambassador, was one of a series of gatherings of local ambassadors who are not included in EU or Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) meetings. Other participants included the Russian and Chinese ambassadors. Larrea emphasized that people need to believe they have the opportunity to improve their lives. He saw this is the only way to stop immigration and bring overseas Ecuadorians back home.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Correa's Proud and Sovereign Fatherland (PAIS) movement won the Constituent Assembly election (Ref A) because people believed it would comply with its promises for change, Larrea said. They were convinced because they were already seeing the effects of Correa administration policies, including credit and housing bonds. Larrea stressed the importance of anti-corruption measures and high ethical standards for building people's trust in government and improving the situation in Ecuador. He considered it particularly important to assist farmers by providing credit and other measures.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Larrea told the ambassadors that PAIS was holding meetings on the content of the new Constitution, which will be drafted by the Constituent Assembly. He said he personally did not think much of the constitutional draft by the commission of the National Council of Higher Education (CONESUP) because he considered it too long and disagreed with some of its provisions (NFI).

[1](#)5. (SBU) Larrea commented on several specific constitutional provisions:

-- The new Constitution should require the government to guarantee health, education, and housing for Ecuadorian citizens.

-- The country should be divided into seven regions, with Quito and Guayaquil each constituting one of these regions.

-- The question of re-election is too tied to Correa personally. The Assembly needs to step back and consider what is best for the country in the long run. Larrea recalled that Ecuador used to have Congressional elections every two years without allowing re-election; he liked that approach but recognized it was unstable.

-- The PAIS movement is divided on whether to maintain a unicameral Congress or change to a bicameral one.

¶6. (SBU) Twice during the luncheon, Larrea expressed appreciation for the assistance the United States provided to the GOE's anti-drug efforts. He commented that Ecuador was doing better on kidnapping, but thought that yet stronger law enforcement efforts were needed overall, including new technology for the judicial police. Larrea expressed concern about the potential release of long-term detainees without trial, saying the GOE was proposing a law to stop the releases while at the same time providing additional prosecutors to help clear out the backlog. In lamenting the shortcomings of the justice system, he cited the case of a man held four years after his release was authorized because the document did not reach prison authorities.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: President Correa designated Minister Larrea as the administration's point of contact with the PAIS bloc in the Constituent Assembly and other political forces. During this luncheon, Larrea appeared calm and confident that he is on the inside track with Correa. He acknowledged that things look different to him after being in government, an evolution we have seen as he has become an increasingly constructive USG partner (Ref B).
JEWELL